



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

March 9, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W. T. Fujioka", written over a horizontal line.

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

STATUS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNTY'S FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S INDEX RECOMMENDATIONS

On June 30, 2009, on motion by Supervisors Antonovich and Yaroslavsky, your Board directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in conjunction with all affected departments to:

1. Immediately implement the short-term recommendations contained in the June 12, 2009 report regarding strategies to increase the utilization of the Family and Children's Index (FCI), that do not require funding or legislative changes to implement, including mandating the use of FCI by all affected County departments;
2. Report back to the Board within 30 days on the timeline required to implement any remaining short- and mid-term recommendations that do require the additional funding appropriated to FCI expansion; and
3. Report back to the Board quarterly thereafter on:
 - a. Progress in implementing the short-, mid-, and long-term goals in the CEO's June 12, 2009 report;
 - b. Progress in pursuing the legislative changes necessary for more comprehensive information sharing, which have been identified by County Counsel;

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- c. FCI utilization rates by all affected departments; and
- d. Child safety outcomes and cost benefits.

Background

Family and Children's Index is the name given to the Los Angeles County customized database authorized by the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 18961.5 enacted in 1992. The statute allows children services, health services, law enforcement, mental health services, probation, schools, and social services agencies within counties to share specific information about families who have had relevant contacts with these agencies and who have been identified as being at risk for child abuse or neglect. WIC 18961.5 requires each county to develop their own "at-risk" definitions.

The following Los Angeles County Departments/Agencies currently participate in FCI: Children and Family Services (DCFS); District Attorney (DA); Public Health; Mental Health; Probation; Public Social Services; and Sheriff (LASD).

Family and Children's Index serves as a "pointer" system to direct the authorized users of a participating agency to other County agencies who have had contact with the family subject to the initial inquiry. Once users are pointed to other agencies, WIC 18961.5 requires that confidential, substantive information about a family must be shared through the formation of Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs), unless some other legally permissible way to share that information already exists.

Family and Children's Index only accumulates that information specifically allowed by WIC 18961.5. It does so by receiving data from participating agency databases that meet the County's "at-risk" definitions. Each participating agency has its own internal FCI Protocol establishing that agency's "at-risk" indicators that fit within the County's "at-risk" definition. It is each participating agency's "at-risk" indicators which, in turn, determine the cases that are imported from the agency's database into FCI. In other words, when a child or family meets the County's "at-risk" definition, based on a participating agency's "at-risk" indicators, the participating department provides allowable information to FCI.

Los Angeles County's "at-risk" definition consists of:

1. All "substantiated" and "inconclusive" allegations of child abuse reported to a child protection agency;
2. Whenever a child is allegedly the victim of a crime; and

3. An event or fact involving a child or family member that, in and of itself, would not meet the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) definition of child abuse nor trigger a mandated report, but which would, when combined with additional events or facts, raise a reasonable cause for concern that the family is in need of intervention or services to prevent the occurrence of child abuse and neglect as defined in CANRA.

Ultimately, FCI serves as a tool to assist in the investigation of suspected child abuse and neglect; and provides staff with a fuller picture of the child's and/or family's situation so they can make better informed decisions during the course of their investigations into alleged cases of abuse/neglect.

Update

Since our November 2, 2009 status report to your Board, the CEO, in conjunction with the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), Chief Information Office, County Counsel, Internal Services Department (ISD) and the FCI Managers Team (comprised of representatives from each of the seven participating FCI agencies) have achieved full implementation of the FCI application and process. In this context, full implementation means that all agencies: (1) import allowable data into FCI on a regular basis; (2) share confidential information with another participating agency, as a result of a matched FCI query, through the formation of MDTs (unless some other legally permissible way to share that information exists); and (3) maintain the capacity to respond to such requests on a 24/7 basis.

The CEO, ICAN, and the FCI Managers Team continue to meet twice a month to oversee the evaluation of the FCI application, execution of additional technical enhancements, inclusion of other County and non-County agencies as permitted by law, development of legislative changes, and maintenance of ongoing training efforts.

Summary of Accomplishments

Over the past three months, significant progress has been made to ensure that the FCI application is fully implemented and utilized. These efforts include: (1) completion of the FCI training to over 1,200 departmental staff; (2) execution of a FCI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) containing a standardized set of protocols including a new 24/7 requirement; (3) submission of a set of legislative changes to seven child welfare-related statutes to remove barriers that restrict/limit information sharing between County agencies and other entities; and (4) creation of a set of measures and processes to evaluate the use of the FCI application and the timely exchange of information among participating agencies.

Below are details of significant steps completed, as well as timetables for pending evaluation, expansion and enhancement activities.

Implementation and Evaluation

Implementation steps completed:

1. On November 6, 2009, executed a new MOU among participating agencies. The MOU contains a set of standardized protocols and includes a requirement for all agencies to maintain 24/7 capability to respond to requests made for information by other participating agencies;
2. On November 12, 2009, the CEO, DA, ISD, and ICAN conducted the first in a series of FCI trainings to 117 staff from all participating agencies. This training was recorded by the Department of Human Resources and converted into an online FCI training module that is hosted on the County's Learning Management System;
3. On November 17, 2009, the FCI training module was ready for use by all FCI participating agencies;
4. On December 7, 2009, the CEO, ICAN, and the FCI Managers Team completed the development of a set of draft evaluation tools to measure the use of the FCI application and the timely exchange of information among participating agencies;
5. On December 28, 2009, the CEO, ICAN, and the FCI Managers Team developed a draft set of evaluation strategies that include monthly online user surveys and a structure for conducting monthly user focus groups;
6. On January 6, 2010, participating agencies developed a template of most commonly requested information. These templates were submitted to the CEO and ISD to prepare for technical enhancements that will further expedite the sharing of information; and
7. By January 27, 2010, FCI training was completed by 1,202 staff (361 more than had been originally anticipated) from all participating agencies. The three agencies with the most staff include: (a) DCFS: 947; (b) Probation: 101; and (c) LASD: 67.

Results of pre- and post-tests indicate that trainees significantly increased their understanding of the FCI application/process as evidenced by an increase in their average overall scores from 60 percent to 92 percent.

Evaluation efforts underway:

1. By March 31, 2010, FCI user focus groups will be conducted. Data from these focus groups will be collated for inclusion in the first quarterly report covering the periods of January 1, 2010 to March 31, 2010;
2. By March 31, 2010, FCI user surveys will be distributed to a random sampling of FCI users; and
3. By March 31, 2010, FCI cost-sharing arrangements with MOU Departments will be reviewed to determine if a more equitable distribution of ongoing maintenance costs among participating agencies can be achieved. Once this is done, ISD will be notified to make any necessary adjustments to their billing for FCI support.

Expansion

Expansion efforts underway:

1. By March 31, 2010, in consultation with County Counsel, the CEO, ISD, and ICAN will meet with the new County departments/agencies to begin finalizing their "at-risk" indicators and developing their protocols;
2. By April 30, 2010, expand FCI participation to approved County agencies. Steps will include: (a) finalizing a set of "at-risk" indicators; (b) developing protocols; (c) identifying related costs; (d) executing a revised MOU; and (e) training staff; and
3. By April 30, 2010, in consultation with County Counsel, the CEO, ISD and ICAN will revise the "at-risk" indicators of participating agencies to enhance the information that is contained in FCI.

Future expansion efforts include:

1. By May 31, 2010, in consultation with County Counsel and based on outreach efforts by the CEO, ICAN, and the FCI Managers Team will explore expanding FCI participation to include at least two key non-County agencies (e.g., law enforcement, schools, private hospitals, etc.); and
2. By June 30, 2010, expand FCI participation to at least two approved non-County agencies. Steps taken will be parallel to the ones described above for new County agencies, except that a contractual agreement between the County and non-County agencies will be developed.

Enhancements

Technical enhancements completed:

1. On November 5, 2009, ISD enhanced the FCI application by adding a new search function ("Soundex") that allows users to search for a client by the way their name sounds;
2. On November 30, 2009, ISD completed a capacity analysis of the existing server to test how many simultaneous users the FCI application can handle;
3. On January 5, 2010, ISD completed address standardization, validation and geocoding of the data currently contained in FCI to increase the accuracy of matches made;
4. On January 20, 2010, ISD enhanced the FCI "Query" screen to allow for better address search results;
5. On February 4, 2010, ISD modified existing FCI reports to enhance their clarity and provided administrative access to the CEO for accountability purposes; and
6. On February 28, 2010, the CEO in partnership with ISD and the FCI Managers Team implemented an online tracking log within the FCI application to collect data on when requests and responses for information between agencies occur. Live testing of this feature will soon be underway.

Technical enhancements underway:

1. By March 31, 2010, the CEO in partnership with ICAN and the FCI Managers Team will develop a user survey that will be distributed to a random sample of FCI users. An additional function will be added to automatically email surveys to users on a regular basis; and
2. By June 30, 2010, ISD will add evaluation-related tools to the FCI application that will *automatically* track: (a) when requests for information from other agencies were initiated; (b) the timeliness by which agencies responded to these requests; and (c) to the extent possible, how subsequent information shared was used.

Legislation

On January 20, 2010, County Counsel and the CEO worked in partnership with the California Welfare Directors Association to develop a bill that details a set of legislative changes to seven state child welfare-related statutes. This bill seeks to remove barriers that restrict or limit information sharing between County departments and entities authorized to investigate, prevent, identify, manage or treat child abuse or neglect. Additionally, the DA developed a bill to reduce the number of staff required to form a MDT from three to two, which would expedite the flow of information among FCI agencies. Both bills have secured sponsors.

Conclusion

Over the last three months, the CEO, County Counsel, ICAN, and the FCI Managers Team have worked closely to achieve full implementation and use of FCI. This has been made possible through a combination of efforts that include the development of: a new MOU; a set of standardized protocols, including the ability to respond to requests for information made by other agencies on a 24/7 basis; implementation of technical enhancements to improve matches; and creation of an online training module. As a result of these efforts, and in direct correlation with training of over 1,200 staff since November 12, 2009, there has been a marked increase in the use of the application as can be seen in the attached *FCI Queries Report*.

It is expected that the use of FCI will continue to increase as participation is expanded and technical enhancements are made. To better prepare for this expansion and establish an ongoing mechanism for evaluating the FCI application/process, a set of measures and technical enhancements to the FCI application will be implemented by no later than June 30, 2010. These additional efforts will enhance the way in which the FCI tool is used to identify, prevent, treat, and manage child abuse and neglect throughout Los Angeles County.

As instructed by your Board, the CEO will continue to report progress made on a quarterly basis. Our next status report will be submitted to your Board by April 30, 2010, and will focus on the results of evaluation efforts for January 1, 2010 through March 31, 2010.

Each Supervisor
March 9, 2010
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If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me or your staff may contact Kathy House, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at khhouse@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:KH:LB
CP:GS:hn

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
District Attorney
Sheriff
Chief Information Office
Children and Family Services
Internal Services Department
Mental Health
Probation Department
Public Health
Public Social Services
Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

FCI QUERIES REPORT

(For the Period of Aug.1, 2009 - Mar.03, 2010*)

Attachment

Queries By Month

Year/Month	Total Queries	Number of Queries	Agency
2009 - 08	13,691	88	DA
		13,042	DCFS
		561	LASD
2009 - 09	16,251	126	DA
		15,389	DCFS
		736	LASD
2009 - 10	17,341	125	DA
		16,471	DCFS
		39	DPH-A
2009 - 11	16,799	706	LASD
		120	DA
		15,945	DCFS
		46	DPH-A
		37	ICAN
2009 - 12	18,760	651	LASD
		148	DA
		17,840	DCFS
		2	DMH
		70	DPH-A
		5	DPSS
2010 - 01	19,359	662	LASD
		33	PROB
		431	DA
		18,347	DCFS
		44	DPH-A
2010 - 02	19,729	5	DPSS
		526	LASD
		6	PROB
		563	DA
		18,502	DCFS
		67	DPH-A
2010 - 03 *	3,173	2	DPSS
		43	ICAN
		549	LASD
		3	PROB
		22	DA
		3,047	DCFS
2010 - 03 *	3,173	3	DPH-A
		1	DPSS
		83	LASD
		17	PROB

Total 125,103

Queries By Agency

Agency	Total Queries	Number of Queries	Year/Month
DA	1,623	88	2009 - 08
		126	2009 - 09
		125	2009 - 10
		120	2009 - 11
		148	2009 - 12
		431	2010 - 01
		563	2010 - 02
DCFS	118,583	22	2010 - 03 *
		13,042	2009 - 08
		15,389	2009 - 09
		16,471	2009 - 10
		15,945	2009 - 11
		17,840	2009 - 12
		18,347	2010 - 01
DMH	2	18,502	2010 - 02
		3,047	2010 - 03 *
DPH-A	269	2	2009 - 12
		39	2009 - 10
		46	2009 - 11
		70	2009 - 12
		44	2010 - 01
		67	2010 - 02
		3	2010 - 03 *
DPSS	13	5	2009 - 12
		5	2010 - 01
		2	2010 - 02
		1	2010 - 03 *
ICAN	80	37	2009 - 11
		43	2010 - 02
LASD	4,474	561	2009 - 08
		736	2009 - 09
		706	2009 - 10
		651	2009 - 11
		662	2009 - 12
		526	2010 - 01
		549	2010 - 02
		83	2010 - 03 *
PROB	59	33	2009 - 12
		6	2010 - 01
		3	2010 - 02
		17	2010 - 03 *

Total 125,103